



GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Public Hearing February 11, 2013

Testimony in opposition to Raised Bill No. 6100.

An Act Concerning The Regional Consolidation of Certain Functions of Election Administration

Senator Musto, Representative Jutila and members of the GAE Committee

My name is Melissa Russell, and I am president of ROVAC and a registrar from Bethlehem. I am here today to testify in opposition to HB 6100, the regional consolidation of election administration.

As you all know, each municipality in Connecticut has a Registrar of Voters from each major party to do the duties of elections administration. This is a system that has served our state very well for many years. The fact that there are officials from each party who are jointly responsible for all elections duties means that no party has an advantage over another in any election. The fact that Registrars manage the lists of electors in each town means that personal and close attention is paid and corrections are made to irregularities, duplications, and the occasional attempt at fraud. It also means that the electors of each municipality have a local official to go to for personal service when there are questions or concerns, rather than going to a regional or state agency, much like a visit to the DMV.

Our polling places across the state are many and diverse, and who better than a local Registrar to know the quirks of each one in their municipality? They know which polling places may need extra curbside voting for a district that has a large elderly population, or which districts need extra lines to serve college students, or which elections or referenda questions are likely to cause a spike in turnout, thus needing extra staff on hand. For these reasons, it's important that local Registrars train their poll workers accordingly, to account for the individual needs of each of their districts.

Machine maintenance is also something that is best handled at a local level. At this time, the tabulator company sends out a technician to each municipality to regularly check and maintain the machines. At this time, Registrars can address any concerns

they may have, and will be the best people to know which machines may have had issues in the past, or which need new batteries, parts, or need to be replaced. Registrars have the best "on the ground" knowledge for keeping our voting tabulators in top condition.

As president of ROVAC, I know that our Registrars and their deputies are highly capable people who care passionately about the quality of our election system. They are dedicated to the electors of their towns, and committed to providing a positive experience to each person who seeks their services.